

3. What is the nature of students and the learning process, and how does it suggest organizing learning experiences and relationships? Multicultural movements directly challenge deficit perspectives about children from historically marginalized communities, and ethnocentric assumptions about what "normal" children are like. Educators assert, with some research support, that honoring and building on children's connections to their cultural and linguistic roots and their community-based identities provides the best base for academic learning. This is, in fact, a process that White middle-class students usually experience in school. By attending to what students in one's own school and classroom already know, the learning processes they developed at home, and the language structures they already have, teachers can help students acquire new knowledge and language more effectively than when these cultural assets are ignored (Au, 1990; Gay, 2000; Heath, 1983; Jordan, 1992; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Reyes, Scribner, & Scribner, 1999).

4. How should curriculum be evaluated? How should learning be evaluated? To whom is curriculum evaluation accountable? Multicultural movements, which have arisen largely through grassroots community activism based on problems parents and community leaders from historically marginalized communities have had with schools, have emphasized accountability to communities. They have emphasized that expectations for children be held high and that means of evaluating student learning be fair and broad enough to actually capture what children know and can do. Historically, standardized testing has not been designed to do that, and even revamped paper-and-pencil tests are usually inadequate as the sole means of evaluating learning (Darling-Hammond, 1994). Ultimately, communities should be included in the process of deciding curriculum and evaluation.

The Standards Movement and Curriculum

Particulars of today's standards-based reform movement are new, but its fundamental ideas are not. Readers might remember "back to basics" movements in the 1950s and the 1970s, or the competency-based education movement of the 1970s. Like the current standards movement, they were concerned with raising student achievement by specifying exactly what all students should know, then teaching to those specifications. And, like the standards movement today, they usually framed academic achievement as a different (possibly competing) matter from democratizing curriculum.

Historically, standards-based reform goes back to the beginning of the twentieth century, when early curriculum theorists conceptualized the

school as a factory producing workers for the needs of society, as Ellwood Cubberley expressed in 1916:

Our schools are, in a sense, factories in which the raw products (children) are to be shaped and fashioned into products to meet the various demands of life. The specifications for manufacturing come from the demands of twentieth-century civilization, and it is the business of the school to build its pupils according to the specifications laid down. (cited by Beyer & Liston, 1996, p. 19)

Like Cubberley, many of his contemporaries believed that curriculum should be organized scientifically for efficiency, with learning objectives derived from social and economic needs. Curriculum should then be standardized based on those objectives, and student learning measured against them. Teachers should be told exactly what to teach to create maximum continuity as students proceed from one grade level to the next. As Beyer and Liston (1996) observed, "The teacher became cast as a manager of personnel (students) and materials (texts, other curriculum materials), and as an overseer of a process of production (the achievement of minute and pre-specified objectives) that in some ways was as disconnected from her own interests and values as it was from students'" (p. 22).

Genesis of the current standards-based reform movement is often traced to the publication of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 (National Commission on Excellence in Education), which launched a round of highly visible national discussions that framed the main purpose of schools as regaining U.S. economic competitive advantage internationally. Many reports published during the 1980s argued that U.S. students were increasingly failing to learn the skills and knowledge the United States needed for economic competition. This wave of reports expressed concerns of the business community that technological advances and global restructuring were transforming the nature of production and work and that the United States would need to develop many, many more workers for demands of this new economy. These new workers would need to master skill sets such as "technological visualization; abstract reasoning, mathematical, scientific, and computer expertise; knowledge of specific technologies and production techniques; [and] individual initiative" (Berliner & Biddle, 1995, p. 141).

On the heels of the reform reports were a barrage of highly visible conservative critiques of multiculturalism (e.g., A. Bloom, 1989; Ravitch, 1990; Schlesinger, 1992). These critiques targeted curricular changes and policies that had been instituted in schools and universities, charging that multiculturalism was damaging education and social cohesion. They cast multiculturalists as fringe radicals who were undermining fundamental

American political and cultural ideals by appealing to the divisiveness of ethnic cheerleading. They also argued that multicultural curricula were intellectually weak and addressed minority student achievement in damaging ways by appealing mainly to self-esteem rather than hard work and academic challenge (Sleeter, 1995). In this context, the English-only movement gained momentum as well.

The reform reports, as well as the conservative critiques of multiculturalism, depicted schools and U.S. society generally as being in a state of crisis. In response, in the 1980s states began to construct disciplinary content standards and testing programs. California, for example, began this work in 1982 when it elected Bill Honig as state Superintendent of Public Instruction on a platform of reforming schools by raising standards and centralizing curriculum.

For a time there were also efforts to establish national curriculum content standards and tests. In 1989 President G. H. W. Bush and the state governors called a summit to set goals for improving schools. The resulting National Education Goals Panel set about attempting to establish national goals for student learning. Goals 2000: Educate America Act and Improving America's Schools Act, passed in 1994, gave impetus to efforts to establish national curriculum standards in math, science, history, English, and other disciplines. National discipline-based groups began writing standards for each discipline. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) established a set of mathematics standards that have subsequently been used by most states. National standards documents were drafted in other disciplines as well, but because of philosophical disagreements over what all students should know within the disciplines, attempts to establish national standards waned, and states were left to determine what students should know. To varying degrees, states used national discipline standards documents to inform the writing of their own state content standards. By the mid-1990s, most states had content standards in place and were designing or beginning to implement statewide systems of testing based on them.

Teachers generally have some awareness of the process by which standards in their own state were set, but little or no awareness of the agenda-setting role that has been played behind the scenes by the business community, including the National Alliance of Business and the Business Roundtable. The Business Roundtable (1997) summed up their position as follows:

We believe the first step to solving our nation's education problems is to substantially raise academic standards and verify achievement through rigorous testing. . . . To those of us in business, it is obvious that large segments

of our education system are failing today. We are the ones, after all, who get the first real-world view of the young people emerging from the American education "pipeline."

The business community had painted the sense of crisis that emerged during the 1980s through the various reform reports (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). In 1989, the Business Roundtable devoted one of its annual meetings to "synthesizing business-led reforms of the 1980s into a high-stakes testing agenda" (Berlak, 2003, p. 35). Standards, assessment, and accountability emerged as the three components most central to its school reform plan (Business Roundtable, 1999). The organization then systematically applied pressure on states in those three areas.

No Child Left Behind, passed by Congress and signed into law in 2001, mandates that states receiving federal funding

implement statewide accountability systems covering all public schools and students. These systems must be based on challenging State standards in reading and mathematics, annual testing for all students in grades 3–8, and annual statewide progress objectives ensuring that all groups of students reach proficiency within 12 years. Assessment results and State progress objectives must be broken out by poverty, race, ethnicity, disability, and limited English proficiency to ensure that no group is left behind. (U.S. Department of Education, 2001)

Science was added for testing in 2005. By school year 2013–14, the law requires that all students score at or above the proficiency level established by their state. Schools that fail to meet targets not only receive negative publicity and sanctions, but ultimately may be shut down, a consequence beginning to be applied at the time of this writing.

States have responded somewhat differently to this legislation; to illustrate a range of responses, I contrast California with Nebraska. California had been establishing a system of detailed content standards, testing, and accountability targets prior to passage of No Child Left Behind. By 2004, it required an extensive test battery given to all students in Grades 2–11. Content tests in English–language arts and math were given to students in Grades 2–11; history–social science in Grades 8, 10, and 11; and science in Grades 5–11. A norm-referenced test was given to students in Grades 2–8 in reading, language, spelling, and mathematics; and to students in Grades 9–11 in reading, language, mathematics, and science. All 10th graders also took the California High School Exit Examination in language arts and math, which will be required for graduation beginning with the class of 2006. Alternative assessment was made available for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Spanish speakers who had been in U.S.

schools for less than one year or who participated in bilingual programs took the Spanish Assessment of Basic Education (SABE), a nationally normed test that measures basic skills.

In Nebraska, by contrast, curriculum and assessment are controlled at the district level. Although the state established content standards, districts may either adopt them or develop equally rigorous standards of their own. The state also sets a schedule for student assessment, but the assessments are chosen—and some are developed—at the district level, with teacher participation. School districts use a combination of assessments, including norm-referenced tests, criterion-referenced assessments, and locally developed classroom assessments. Districts submit portfolios of assessment practices and procedures for quality review by the state. The only statewide test is a writing test. Districts also participate in other national assessments such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Nebraska's local control, however, is an exception to the top-down model used in most states.

Thus school reform following the Business Roundtable's model has national authority. But it offers a compelling twist to earlier accountability systems by requiring schools to address historic achievement gaps. Herein lies a connection between multicultural education movements and the standards movement: coming from different social locations and using very different sets of assumptions, both attempt to improve the learning of children from historically oppressed communities. In a letter to Congress, over 100 African American and Latino superintendents emphasized their support for accountability systems that focus directly on this gap, writing that underachievement of students of color and students who live in poverty "has been swept underneath overall averages for too long." They found that accountability systems "give them leverage for moving their systems to action" ("Don't turn back the clock," 2003).

In light of this summary, I now briefly examine how the standards-based reform movement frames the four central curriculum questions.

1. *What purposes should the curriculum serve?* Through the standards movement, the business community and conservative allies have defined normatively what schools should do and what curriculum is for, rendering the other three curriculum questions as technical matters. They define the main purpose of curriculum as making the United States more economically competitive globally by providing the business community with workers for a revamped economy, and making future workers more employable by equipping them with skills employers seek.² A much less stated purpose is to reduce dissent and promote cultural and linguistic

assimilation by focusing everyone on the same skills, facts, and traditional discipline-based concepts.

2. *How should knowledge be selected, who decides what knowledge is most worth teaching and learning, and what is the relationship between those in the classroom and the knowledge selection process?* The standards movement assumes consensus about what all students should know and be able to do, and that consensus can be established at the state level objectively by disciplinary "experts." Generally standards are presented as consensus documents, even if their adoption was controversial.³ It further assumes worthwhile knowledge is measurable on standardized tests. School or classroom level selections of knowledge are to be made *within* the boundaries of a state's content standards, and aligned to them. So, since the degree of specificity of standards varies from state to state, local latitude to select what to teach and learn varies accordingly.

3. *What is the nature of students and the learning process, and how does it suggest organizing learning experiences and relationships?* Implicitly, the standards movement casts children as empty vessels to fill with prescribed knowledge. State standards generally are much more specific about what to teach than they are about children or how teaching might occur. An exception is in the area of reading, for which mandated teaching processes are specified in many state standards. And it is assumed that specific "best" teaching strategies that work in classrooms across the country can be identified through experimental research. Standards documents as well as No Child Left Behind legislation emphasize that all children can learn, implicitly framing children as relatively homogeneous except for differences in achievement level; differences such as those based in culture or language are minimized in standards discussions.

4. *How should curriculum be evaluated? How should learning be evaluated? To whom is curriculum evaluation accountable?* Evaluation of students' learning and of school performance are strongly emphasized in the standards movement, with criterion-referenced standardized tests serving as the main evaluation tool. Schools and teachers are to be held accountable to the state through testing, with the requirement of meeting annual targets, including targets aimed at closing achievement gaps. Schools are also held accountable to parents, in a market-based context. Ultimately, the law encourages parents to seek another school if the one their child attends does not produce reasonably high test scores.

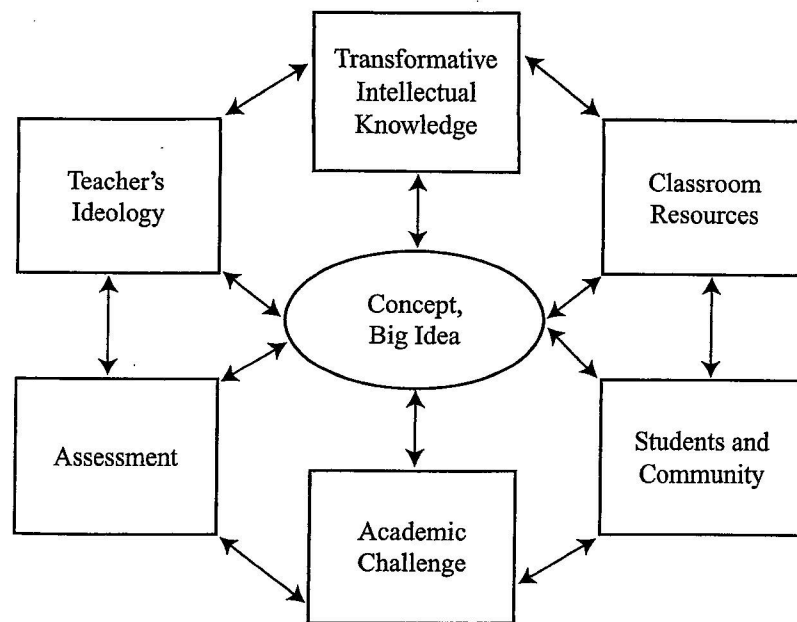
FRAMEWORK FOR MULTICULTURAL CURRICULUM DESIGN

In the context of the recent standards movement, what can teachers do—particularly those who subscribe to the work of multicultural movements? All students can benefit from well-planned, coherent curriculum, and teachers are central to planning the curriculum that students actually encounter. Four decades ago, Taba (1962) questioned the removal of curriculum planning from classrooms and teachers, stating, “The usual method of curriculum revision is to start by revising the ‘framework’ before experimenting with the more specific parts of a functioning curriculum: the teaching units on specific grade levels” (p. 9). She went on to speculate that “if the sequence in the curriculum development were reversed—that if, first, teachers were invited to experiment with specific aspects of curriculum and then, on the basis of these experiments, a framework were to be developed—curriculum development would acquire a new dynamic” (p. 9).

The remainder of this book develops possibilities,⁴ tempered with concern about constraints. The book develops a curriculum framework that can help teachers design multicultural curricula that foster intellectual engagement and democratic activism. In the framework, illustrated in Figure 1.1, curriculum is organized around central ideas, and developed in relationship to transformative intellectual knowledge (knowledge bases of historically oppressed communities), students and their community, academic challenge, classroom resources, and ongoing assessment of learning. In the process, teachers critically examine the impact of their own beliefs on curricular decisions they make. As the arrows suggest, all of the elements interrelate and affect one another.

To explore and illustrate what teachers can do, I developed vignettes of teachers’ thinking, planning, and teaching on the basis of my work with two sections of the Multicultural Curriculum Design course I taught during fall 2001 and fall 2003.⁵ The two sections included 39 educators; most appear (somewhat in the background) in Chapters 2–9.⁶ The educators are highly diverse, including K–12 classroom teachers and beginning college-level instructors. The number of years they had taught varied widely, ranging from a few who had just earned their teaching credential or had just begun instructing at the college level to several who had taught for at least 15 years. Table 1.1 gives a breakdown of the 39 participants in my study according to the level at which they taught, gender, and racial/ethnic identification.

I also selected eight very competent K–12 teachers for classroom visits and developed teaching vignettes based on these visits. Seven of the eight were part of the 39 educators described above. I included one addi-

Figure 1.1. Framework for Multicultural Curriculum Design

tional teacher who was in the same graduate program but not in that particular course, because the work she was doing in her classroom fit this book so well. When selecting these eight teachers, I tried to make the group as diverse as possible in terms of grade level, student population, and teacher's racial/ethnic background. All eight are women; four teach elementary school, three teach middle school, and one teaches high school. They were teaching in six different school districts, none in the same school. Racially and ethnically, four are White and four are of color; their backgrounds and identities are sufficiently complex that they are described when the teachers are introduced in subsequent chapters rather than here. Although their student populations vary quite a bit, all reflect demographics of the central coast of California.⁷

During 2003–04 I spent 2–8 hours in each of their classrooms in 1–3 visits. I also taperecorded an interview with each teacher; the interviews lasted about an hour. I developed the vignettes working with notes from my observations, transcriptions of the interviews, copies of class papers and other data (either videotapes or journals), and in some cases, master's theses. After I had constructed the vignettes and embedded them within

Table 1.1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants in Study

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Number of Participants</i>
TEACHING LEVEL	
Elementary	17
Secondary	12
College/adult	10
GENDER:	
Female	31
Male	8
RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION:	
White	17
Mexican, Mexican American, Latino	9
Greek national	3
African American	2
Biracial (Latino/Filipino, and Indonesian/Italian)	2
Asian American	2
Filipino	1
Kenyan national	1
Chadian national	1
Chinese national	1

earlier drafts of chapters, I sent drafts to the teachers and invited their feedback; all eight responded. Teachers had the option of being referred to by their real first name, or by a pseudonym; seven of the eight elected their real name.

The remaining chapters relate to individual parts of the framework for multicultural design and are nested within the four central curriculum questions discussed earlier in this chapter.

1. *What purposes should the curriculum serve?* Chapter 2 examines how assumptions teachers bring to curriculum planning affect decisions they make. Teachers need to be aware of their own beliefs regarding diverse

communities, the nature of knowledge, and connections between knowledge and its social location; this chapter gives some guidance in developing that awareness. Chapter 3 examines "big ideas" as a tool for designing curriculum for coherence and depth rather than breadth of coverage. Content standards can serve as a source of big ideas, but at the same time, they rest on ideological foundations teachers need to examine.

2. *How should knowledge be selected, who decides what knowledge is most worth teaching and learning, and what is the relationship between those in the classroom and the knowledge selection process?* Chapter 5 explores transformative intellectual knowledge, reinserting sustained consideration of whose knowledge schools teach back into curriculum planning. Guidance is given to help teachers start to investigate and work with transformative intellectual knowledge. Chapter 7 discusses standards in relationship to intellectual challenge and preparation for college, showing strategies teachers can use to plan for intellectual engagement, while developing skills and content knowledge simultaneously.

3. *What is the nature of students and the learning process, how does it suggest organizing learning experiences and relationships?* Chapter 6 explores students and their communities in relationship to curriculum design. Suggestions are given for learning about and connecting with students' community-based knowledge. Then the chapter explores building curriculum in a way that engages students with diverse points of view. Chapter 8 examines the selection and use of teaching resources for classroom use, beginning with a critique of textbooks, then considers selecting resources in relationship to both content and form. Both chapters emphasize curriculum planning for active student engagement with academics.

4. *How should curriculum be evaluated? How should learning be evaluated? To whom is curriculum evaluation accountable?* Chapter 4 examines assessment of student learning. The chapter begins with a discussion of the testing context within which most teachers are working, then considers the design and use of classroom-based assessment in ways that are fair to students and offer guidance for improving teaching and learning.

Finally, Chapter 9 returns to a consideration of multicultural curriculum design in light of very real differences in assumptions between multicultural and standards movements. Teachers face ethical issues when deciding how to navigate crosscurrents of multicultural curriculum and accountability systems. Teachers can learn to construct stronger student-relevant,

difference-sensitive, antioppressive curriculum; teachers are also directed to teach to standards and tests, to which students are held accountable. A vignette of a classroom teacher illustrates these crosscurrents and embedded ethical dilemmas.

NOTES

1. In 1985 California had adopted a math framework that "in many ways was the antecedent of the 1989 NCTM [National Council for the Teaching of Mathematics] Standards" (Schoenfeld, 2004, p. 269) in its emphasis on thinking and problem solving. But it was loudly condemned by conservative groups that objected to constructivist pedagogical processes that teach math reasoning in a way that may allow students to come to incorrect answers through computation errors. Constructivism was caricatured in media as "fuzzy math."

2. Notably, the Business Roundtable directly links education with workforce development in its task force Education and the Workforce.

3. California's history-social science framework is an example. Multicultural education critic Diane Ravitch was appointed as its principal writer. Conceptualized around a story of immigration and triumph of the U.S. political system, its writing in the 1980s prompted protests in several communities of color on the basis of its framing everyone as an immigrant and, as a result, downplaying racism, enslavement, and the killing off of indigenous people (Cornbleth & Waugh, 1995; King, 1992; Wynter, 1992). Nevertheless, the California State Board of Education has readopted it three times.

4. The vignettes illustrate a few examples of classroom teaching; readers who are interested in more examples for specific grade levels or subject areas may find *Turning on Learning* (Grant & Sleeter, 2003) useful, since it illustrates how to make curriculum and instruction multicultural through more than 50 before-and-after lesson plans, at K-12 grade levels and in diverse subject areas.

5. The vignettes were supported by a self-study I conducted of my teaching in these two sections. Between 2001 and 2004 I participated in a scholarship of teaching project known as the Visible Knowledge Project, which is a national network of several colleges and universities. The national Visible Knowledge Project is organized through Georgetown University (<http://crossroads.georgetown.edu/vkp/>). The idea behind "visible knowledge" is exploring how to make complex knowledge more visible to students, using new media. All participants develop a self-study of their own teaching, focusing their investigation on a question related to a course or form of pedagogy; mine examined teachers' learning process in two semesters of Multicultural Curriculum Design.

6. With their permission, I kept copies of most of their papers to use as data reflecting their thinking about issues, their approach to planning, and their responses to some of the activities described in later chapters. During fall 2001 I videotaped about half of the class sessions; during fall 2003 I wrote a detailed

journal describing what happened in each class session immediately after class had ended. Some of these data are used in this book.

7. The K-12 student enrollment of Monterey County, where most of this book's teachers were teaching, was 64 percent Latino, 24 percent White, 4 percent Asian and Pacific Islander, 3.5 percent African American, 3 percent Filipino, 0.5 percent Native American, and 1 percent other; also 39 percent of the students were classified as English-language learners. During school year 2002-03, 57 percent of its public school students were on free or reduced lunch.